

Fatality Narrative

Brick Mason Falls from Scaffolding*

Industry: Masonry

Occupation: Mason

Task: Laying masonry block

Type of Incident: Fall from scaffolding

Release Date: April 8, 2003

Case No.: 02WA045

SHARP Report No.: 71-9-2003

On August 1, 2002, a mason working from a scaffold to build a block wall, leaned forward over the wall he was working on and fell 25 feet to a concrete surface below. The 32-year-old member of the bricklayer's union was working for a masonry contractor helping to construct a warehouse-style building. At the time of the incident the victim was level trowelling a masonry block wall, the top of which was 24 inches above the scaffold plank on which he was standing. He fell forward over the wall and landed on a concrete surface 25 feet below. Front guardrails or fall arrest systems were not in use.

Requirements/Recommendations

(! Indicates items required by law)

- ! Contractors/Employers should have specific written guidelines that address safe practices for the construction of concrete and masonry walls.
- ! A fall restraint or fall arrest system must be used by employees when not directly involved with the over-hand laying process.
- A Fall Prevention Work Plan should be in place and the requirements of the plan need to be enforced by the contractor/employer.
- Only trained competent workers should be allowed to work along the top of new construction (under construction) concrete and masonry walls and only as necessary to complete the construction using proper fall protection/prevention methods.
- Employers should review various fall protection options. Some resources for this information include equipment manufacturers and distributors, professional organizations and industry associations. WISHA Consultation Services can also provide advice on effective fall protection work plans.
- Investigate new and innovative options and resources that can help address fall protection needs while using scaffolding.

State Wide Statistics: This was the 51st work-related fatality in Washington State during the year 2002 and was the 3rd fatal fall from elevation in construction this year.

This bulletin was developed at the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries to alert employers and employees in a timely manner of a tragic loss of life of a worker in Washington State. We encourage you to consider the above information as you make safety decisions for or recommendations to your company or constituency. The information in this notice is based on preliminary data ONLY and does not represent final determinations regarding the nature of the incident or conclusions regarding the cause of the fatality.

Developed by the Washington State Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) and Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act (WISHA) Programs at the WA State Dept. of Labor & Industries. For more information, contact the Safety and Health Assessment and Research for Prevention (SHARP) Program, 1-888-667-4277, <http://www.lni.wa.gov/sharp/face>.